

From Day 1, Gaza History Reflects Volatility and Hatred

Last Sunday, I spoke to about 1,000 people and I asked them a simple question. *Who controlled Gaza before Israel took over the area in the Six-Day War?*

For about a minute no one answered. Finally a woman yelled out the right answer. I don't write this to shame the congregation—not at all—the results would have been similar in any U.S. congregation. The fact remains that people do know the history of the relationship, and it is essential in understanding the rights and wrongs of the conflict, especially in light of what is going on in the area at present.

1948: Israel declares independence. The War of Independence ensues, whereby five Arab counties attacked Israel and as many as 140,000 Arabs fled from Israel to Gaza. To be clear, David Ben Gurion, in Israel's Declaration of Independence encouraged the Arabs to stay and help build the new state. He guaranteed them the same freedoms Jewish Israelis would enjoy. Still, for many reasons (you can check this out to review the reasons for the exodus) the Arabs fled.

Post War: When the war ended, Egypt controlled Gaza (there is your answer) and turned it into a prison. Even Al Jazeera, the openly pro-Arab, anti-Israel news outlet, recognized how poorly the Egyptians treated their Arab cousins.

Unlike the West Bank, which was effectively annexed by Jordan in 1950 and its population offered Jordanian citizenship, Egypt maintained Gaza under military rule until a legislative council was elected in 1957. Moreover, unlike Jordan, Egypt had little ties with or concern for Gaza, and thus the Strip

received little attention or investment in infrastructure between 1948 and 1967.

The world was silent. No one cared for these Arab refugees. As long as Israel could not be blamed, it was not an issue. "In 1955, one observer (a member of the United Nations Secretariat) noted that 'For all practical purposes it would be true to say that for the last six years in Gaza over 300,000 poverty-stricken people have been physically confined to an area the size of a large city park.'"

1967: The Six-Day War effectively liberated the Gaza inhabitants. That's right, I said *liberated*. In the early years, Israelis and Gazan Arabs got along just fine. My wife used to go into Gaza with her father as a child to buy vegetables. It was safe. They were happy to be out from under Egyptian control.

EARLY 1970s–1987: The PLO turns Gazans against Israel. Frequent conflicts erupt between Israel and Gaza. In 1987, the first Intifada was unleashed against Israel where Arab youths, armed with large rocks, targeted both Israeli soldiers and citizens. Israelis were shot at on the highway and sometimes attacked in their homes.

Post Gulf War: President Bush Sr., after crushing Saddam Hussein's attack on Kuwait, calls for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The first peace conference is held in Madrid. Under Clinton, Yitzhak Rabin allowed the PLO into Israel to become the de-facto leadership of the Palestinian people. Things were quiet for a season and there was much cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. The PLO became the Palestinian Authority and governed the West Bank and Gaza.

Late 1990s: Palestinian suicide bombers unleash terror in Israel. Despite the progress and cooperation between Arabs and Jews, there were many Arab groups that did not want peace with Israel. Over the next decade, 171 suicide bombers would

explode themselves in an effort to kill as many Israelis as possible and cause terror throughout the country.

2000-2005: Palestinians unleash the Second Intifada against Israel. Israel, in defense, builds a Security Fence, which causes the rebellion to fizzle out, as it effectively stopped the suicide bombings.

2005: The terror group Hamas wins a third of the Palestinian legislative council.

2006: Hamas wins a majority of the Palestinian legislative council.

2007: Hamas takes over the Gaza strip from Fatah (PLO).

Back up to 2005: Israel, in a controversial move, evacuates Gaza, while gaining nothing in exchange from the Palestinians. Hamas and other groups had shot 1000s of Rockets over the previous years. Israel wrongly though, *if we leave, they will stop*. Actually, since we left Gaza, they have shot over 9,000 rockets and missiles at Israeli population centers. What country would tolerate this? What is even more sickening is that Hamas uses women and children as human shields, willing to sacrifice them for their own purposes. Israel has done far more to protect Gazans than their elected leaders.

2005-2009: Hamas sees Israel's evacuation in 2005 as a sign of weakness and unleashes thousands of Qassam Rockets and Grad Missiles against population centers in southern Israel. Finally, in late 2008, after Israel had endured 3,000 rockets just that year, she invades Gaza in Operation Cast Lead. After 22 days, Israel leaves Gaza, feeling that it had greatly neutralized Hamas' ability to attack Israel.

2012: After increases in rocket attacks, Israel steps up attacks and kills three Hamas operatives, including the top military commander, who was responsible for the capture and

imprisonment of Gilad Shalit.

Hamas declares that Israel has “opened the gates of hell,” and unleashes 275 rockets against Israel today, including three that reach the Tel Aviv area, showing that they now have the capability of killing Israelis in its largest population center—crossing all red lines.

Israel calls up reserves and seeks to neutralize threat. Morsi of Egypt brokers ceasefire.

Present Day: After three Israeli teens are murdered by Hamas activists, an Arab boy is killed by Jews. Hamas takes advantage of the unrest and unleashes 1,000 rockets against Israel in one week. Israel calls up 40,000 reservists. One Israeli death has resulted from direct rocket fire. The Iron Dome has a 90 percent success rate in taking down rockets. As of Thursday, 193 Palestinians are dead, many who were human shields at the request (insistence) of Hamas. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas calls it genocide, but the world is not buying it. Hamas unleashed this war to increase its credibility in the Arab world. However, they may have miscalculated. Even the Palestinian United Nations representative admits that Israel is conducting this war in a humane way while Hamas is committing crimes against humanity.

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